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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Erdogan calls Bush: Ice between U.S., Turkey melting -
Turkiye
Rice: Tough period with Turkey over - Sabah
Rice: American, Turkish cooperation will continue - Vatan
U.S. sees Riyadh attack a new beginning by Al-Qaida - Sabah
Al-Qaida still a significant threat - Milliyet
Saddam's killing fields - Sabah
Saddam buried an entire town of 15,000 - Aksam
Saddam has buried Shiites alive - Milliyet
CIA, Turkish intelligence partnership in N. Iraq - Aksam
'Troops decree' penalty: QIZ shelved - Milliyet
New draft allows foreigners to buy assets - Turkiye
Gul: Turkey might join EU in 2007- Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

Powell in Russia, bomb attack in Chechnya - Radikal
Al-Qaida alarm in Gulf - Yeni Safak
U.S. begins withdrawal from 'unsafe' Saudi Arabia - Zaman
Washington seeking perpetrators of Riyadh attack -
Cumhuriyet
MFA supports U.S.: UN sanctions on Iraq must be lifted -
Cumhuriyet
Largest mass grave in Iraq - Yeni Safak
Bremer to order shooting of looters - Cumhuriyet
Irbil Kurdish Parliament: Turks must withdraw - Radikal
Turkish Cypriots give Greeks drinking water for years -
Zaman
\$20 banknote changes color - Zaman

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Turkey, U.S. QIZ 'frozen' - Dunya
Gul: Turkey will become exports center - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Erdogan condoles Bush: Prime Minister Erdogan called
President Bush on Wednesday for condolences about the Riyadh
bomb attack on Americans, dailies report. Erdogan said
Turkey would provide U.S. with the necessary support in the
struggle against terrorism, and added that Foreign Minister
Gul would pay a visit to Israel and Palestine soon in an
effort to help a solution to the Middle East problem.
Papers comment that the phone call helped in repairing the
damage in Turkish, American relations.

Turkey, U.S. 'secret' talks on PKK/KADEK: Broadcasters
report that CIA and Turkey's intelligence agency MIT have
started secret talks for disarmament of PKK/KADEK militia in
Northern Iraq. The U.S. is getting ready to launch an
operation to disarm PKK members, which might force
terrorists to flee to Turkey, the report says. No agreement
is reached yet in the talks between Turks and Americans, but
Ankara is about to pass a 'repentance law' for terror group
defectors, the report notes. Papers report Foreign Minister
Gul as saying that the PKK/KADEK, which is on the U.S. list
of terror groups, maintained about 4,000 armed militants in

Northern Iraq, and that Americans would not remain indifferent to the group's activities.

Wolfowitz; Rice: A "Hurriyet" commentary does not find convincing enough Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz's refuting of allegations that he told Turkey to apologize for not supporting the U.S. in the war with Iraq. The article claims Wolfowitz has humiliated Turkey by suggesting 'U.S. will set the limits of Turkey's relations with Iran and Syria, all Turkey will have to do is implement it.' On the other hand, all papers report National Security Advisor Rice as saying that U.S. and Turkey, having common strategic interests, would continue working together after a period of difficulty in relations. Reports point to the timing of the Rice statement which arrived just after the condolences call by Prime Minister Erdogan to President Bush for Riyadh bombings. Meanwhile, a "Milliyet" report from Washington claims that the Pentagon has instructed U.S. companies to refrain from giving potential Turkish sub-contractors large shares in Iraq reconstruction jobs. An unidentified owner of a giant Turkish construction company told the paper that Ankara should convince the Pentagon to cease 'punishing' Turks.

U.S., Turkey QIZ agreement shelved: All papers report that the Turkey-Israel-U.S. Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) project, modeled on the U.S.-Jordanian-Israeli free trade zones has been shelved by the U.S. Congress. Negotiations on the QIZ might resurrect at a new U.S., Turkey economic meeting in U.S. in Autumn this year, papers expect. Reports have surmized that the suspension was a U.S. attempt to punish Turkey for non-cooperation in the war against Iraq. By refusing to grant U.S. troops transit passage to Iraq, Turkey has lost hopes for fresh privileges in textile exports to the U.S., papers comment. However, some papers have recognized that the aggressive campaign for the inclusion of textile products within the QIZ agreement was the main source of discordance between the sides, even before the Parliament's decision not to permit a northern front. Some leading Turkish businessmen complain that Turkey has lost its privileged status in the American eye. Turkish Exporters' Union (TIM) called for, if the crisis is not sorted out, increase of Turkish customs on U.S.-made products, to the same level applied on Turkish products to the U.S.

EDITORIAL OPINION

- a) US-EU/Turkey
- b) Riyadh Bombings

"Is Kemalism the main obstacle for Turkey in its relations with the US and EU?"
Murat Yetkin argued in liberal-intellectual Radikal (5/15): "Even though there has not been any official-level confirmation, the US and EU have a common objection about Turkey. The common point is that Kemalist ideology itself and the bureaucracy as this ideology's staunch supporter constitute a major problem for Turkey's ties with the West. Kemalist ideology is the reason for recent US reactions to Turkey as well as for criticism coming from EU countries. . . Similar arguments can also be seen in a recent London-based IISS report, which talks about the possibility of the Turkish army's intervention if the ruling AKP attempts to change the system. For instance, a recent article by Sedat Ergin in 'Hurriyet' noted that Assistant Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz was blaming the army for troubles in Turkish-American relations and was defending AKP. Why? Many observers believe that the US sees the Kemalist bureaucracy as the source of all troubles. Washington allegedly considers the AKP as an antidote against the Kemalist bureaucracy. Therefore, both Wolfowitz and Grossman, who are known as friends of Turkey, accused the Turkish army and not the AKP government for the Iraqi crisis in Turkish-American relations. . . Who represents the Kemalist bureaucracy? It seems it contains TGS, MFA and some judicial circles. . . Although Kemalism as well as Kemalist bureaucracy are named as the essence of problems vis--vis Turkey's relations with the US and EU, the Western decision makers are using this argument in order to disguise the main area for criticism, which is military-government relations in Turkey. The US so far has been carrying out the debate behind the closed doors in order not to challenge with the Turkish army. However, the EU has started making the same debate publicly. . . As part of Turkey's EU integration procedures, the role of the army in Turkey's administration style will eventually and inevitably be brought up. Therefore, a discussion should start by naming clearly as 'the army-government relations' instead of creating pretexts such as Kemalism."

"The Impasse for the Saudis"

Soli Ozel commented in mass appeal Sabah (5/15): "The Bush administration used three justifications before launching the war against terrorism, of which Iraq was the first target. Al Qaida is finished. The military operation against Iraq will bring stability to the region. American presence in the region will play a deterrent role against terrorist acts. . However the Riyadh bombings seem to be proving otherwise. This event also raises concerns about Riyadh-Washington relations. . The events of September 11 posed a serious blow to the special relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia since 1945. Right after the 9/11 attacks, there has been very strong anti-Saudi rhetoric in the US. Comments and speculations included even the need for the toppling of the Riyadh regime, which represents radical fundamentalism and support for terrorist groups. . Today the Saudi regime is trapped between Al Qaida's aggression and the US pressure on Riyadh for change its style. It remains to be seen whether the Saudi dynasty will be able to overcome this critical time."

PEARSON